

AMBASSADOR JOHN HUGH CRIMMINS

Interviewed by: Ashley C. Hewitt, Jr.

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Q: John, maybe a good way to begin is to ask you how you came to enter the Foreign Service to begin with. How did it come about? Was it an ambition of yours?

CRIMMINS: It's very interesting. It's a long story, and I'll try to make it as brief as possible. I was in my young teens in the middle '30s at the time of all the ferment in Europe, the rise of Hitler, all the other things. At that time, there was a spate of books written by foreign correspondents, Negley Farson's *The Way of the Transgressor*, a whole series of things. I was fascinated by them. I was a great reader, and I thought these were exciting. I was drawn to, let's say, foreign affairs very forcefully by these books.

When I graduated from college, I went right into the Army as a second lieutenant of artillery. That was before the war in 1941, June of '41. In the course of my five years in the Army, I had about 18 months at the Inter-American Defense Board when it was first established, as a member of the secretariat, which, of course, helped predispose me further to the eventual entry into the Department and then the Foreign Service.

After the war, I was asked by Alfred McCormick, who was the first head of Intelligence and Research in the Department, to come over to the Department. We'd both been in the Pentagon. I'd been overseas as an Ultra officer with senior commands, and McCormick had been head of the whole Ultra operation in G-2. He was setting up what later came to be INR, and had a special office, the Special Projects Staff, that dealt with some of the material that we were handling during the war.

Q: By Ultra, you mean intelligence.

CRIMMINS: The product, really. The Japanese diplomatic and military traffic, in my case. I was in the Pacific.

Anyway, I was asked to come over and head the Latin American section of this Special Projects Staff, which I did very eagerly, naturally. When I'd come back from overseas, I had made inquiries about entering the Foreign Service, and was told that there were two basic ways of coming in, the exam way or lateral entry after three years and reaching the age of 31. So I came to the Department with the intention of going into the Foreign Service, this being an objective, not fully formulated, but an objective that went back, as I said, to the '30s.

In 1951, after four years in SPS, I took the oral exam and was accepted for entry into the Foreign Service, but because we were still having a family at that time, I asked to postpone acceptance. I entered the Foreign Service in '54 or '55, early '55, I guess it was.

So to sum up, I developed an interest in foreign matters, as anyone growing up in that period almost certainly would, but this was specially stimulated by my fascination with the accounts by Vincent Sheehan and, as I said, Negley Farson and others, of the accounts of practitioners, so to speak. So that's how I came to join the Foreign Service.

Q: So you joined in 1954 or '55. Could you sketch what jobs you were involved with over the next eight or ten years?

CRIMMINS: That would take me to '64. In 1956, I went to the National War College.

Q: How old were you at this time?

CRIMMINS: I was born in 1919, so that would be 36. I went to the War College and then was sent from there to Rio as the transportation/communications attaché^{1/2}. I spent four years in Rio as the first secretary in the economic section in that capacity. Came back as Deputy Director of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs in ARA, when Ed Valen died very suddenly in September. I came back in late July of '61. When Ed died in September of '61, I became the acting director, and after I was promoted in the end of '61, I became the director. I couldn't get promoted because I wasn't senior enough. I couldn't get the full title because I wasn't senior enough. So that takes me to '62.

I was Director of Caribbean and Mexican Affairs until January 1963, when I was sent to Miami to set up the Miami Office of the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, a position that had just been established. I was there until May of '63, when I came back and became the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, replacing Sterling Catrell, who had the job for the first two months or so.

I was Coordinator of Cuban Affairs until January of '66, when I was sent to Santa Domingo to take over from Tapley Bennett. This was eight months after the revolution. I went down first as DCM and then became chargé^{1/2} when Tap left in April, becoming ambassador in June of 1966.

Q: I want to get back to that later. An area of great interest still, of course, is the whole Cuban issue. I was wondering if you could go into a little bit of the history of the Office of Cuban Affairs and what you did in Miami. Who else was working there? How did what you were doing relate to what the agency was doing at that time and the military was doing at that time?

CRIMMINS: That's a very good point, because very little is known about that office.

Q: How did it come to be established?

CRIMMINS: This arose following the missile crisis. The White House, specifically the President, was concerned that there were too many bits and pieces of activity on the Cuban thing, and there was very little coordination, very little cohesion, really, in addressing the Cuban question. So through _____, the Office of the Coordinator was set up with authority to bring together all the many elements of the US Government in the executive branch that had a piece of the Cuban action, and there were innumerable ones, as I will bring out later on.

At the same time, there was great concern about the situation in Miami. You will recall that the Bay of Pigs veterans, the brigade, had just been ransomed and were back in Miami. There was a great deal of ferment in the exiled community. In a concrete way, there was a whole series of freelance operations directed against Cuba by exiled groups, including attacks on ships in Havana Harbor, where a British ship had a small limpet mine exploded near it, that kind of thing.

In a completely different area, there was intense friction between the Anglo community and the Cuban exile community in Miami. So there was a general concern that things were very uneasy in Miami, and as part of the establishment of the Coordinator's Office, they decided to set up sort of a branch office in Miami. I was sent down with instructions to, in effect, hold the exiles' hand, make very clear that we would tolerate no freelance activity that would, in effect, threaten the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement following the missile crisis, that we would not attack Cuba. The Soviets, of course, were insisting that if we wanted to control these activities, we could. Therefore, since they were occurring, we were playing a double game. That kind of business was going on.

Anyway, I went down in late January, early February of '63, set up this office. So far as I know, it was the first and still, perhaps, the only substantive State Department office outside of Washington in history. I mean, this was really something. This was not SY or passport stuff. I had a political brief with respect to the exiles. I had a responsibility toward the state and local officials, who were very exercised about the Cuban exile problem, and I had-and this relates specifically to your question-I had-what shall I say?-I had a coordinating task with all the federal agencies in the Miami area who were involved in the Cuban question. This was the agency which had a huge establishment in the Miami area.

Q: CIA.

CRIMMINS: Yes. Run by Ted Shakley at that time. The Customs, Coast Guard, Immigration and Naturalization, the Labor Department, because of unemployment compensation for unemployed Cuban exiles, which was a terribly sensitive question not only with the Anglos, in general, but with the blacks, particularly, HEW-now HHS-of course, was running the Cuban refugee program and had an enormous operation going on there. We had, as you may remember, people coming from Cuba all the time, semi-clandestinely through boats and rafts and that kind of thing.

So my task was to make sure that everybody was in the same page, as they say, with respect to policy. It worked extremely well with everybody. The agency had responsibility of its own, and I did not get very much involved with them, except to see that they were not carrying on operations that were contrary to policy.

Q: Were you able to do that? Did you have sufficient knowledge of what they were doing, and sufficient authority?

CRIMMINS: With the agency?

Q: Yes.

CRIMMINS: Some of it came from Washington. I would keep in touch with Shakley in a general way. I was not fully read in down there. This came when I became the coordinator in Washington. But the big effort that involved the enforcement agencies and Central Intelligence Agency, also-when I say "enforcement," I mean Customs, Immigration, Coast Guard, FBI, Border Patrol, the whole business-was to prevent these freelance activities, which meant that the Coast Guard would pick up fast boats operated by Cuban exiles at sea and bring them in, and the question was were they going to be tried, were they going to be held and released, that kind of thing, because of sensitivities in the exile community.

Q: How did you know which ones were freelance and which ones weren't?

CRIMMINS: Just personal relationships with Shakley and with some of his people. I knew the elements of the exile community, not necessarily by name, but by organization, that were, let's say, close to the agency, and others who were not.

As I indicated earlier, the exile community was in great ferment because of the failure of the Bay of Pigs, all the rumors about the Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement and selling Cuba down the river, etc., the return of the brigade, as I said. The deterioration of what was called the Cuban Revolutionary Council, the CRC, headed by Jos ½ Miro Cardona, he was a creature of the United States Government, but under pressure from the exile community, the red-hots among the community having become disillusioned and disenchanted with the Kennedy Administration, under pressure from the red-hot elements, Miro Cardona was breaking with the administration, and CRC just collapsed, to no one's great discomfort in the federal government.

But I was there trying to really play down, or participate in a transition from a highly activist period in the Kennedy Administration, with respect to Cuba-I mean all sorts of covert actions and that sort of thing-to a less active period, when one, which moreover put specific clamps, specific visible clamps, on the exile community, visible in the sense that the boats were being picked up all the time, and there were warnings, some of which I participated in, to various groups.

On the sociological questions, there was friction between the state entities and the federal entities, particularly such things as welfare payments and unemployment compensation, that kind of thing. In effect, I had to referee those and try to reach some accommodation that would serve the legitimate interests of the exiles, but at the same time not offend the Anglos who had all the stories about Cuban exile welfare people in pink Cadillacs picking up welfare checks. You know, the usual Reagan-type anecdote.

So it was terribly interesting. It was like being an ambassador in a small country, or consul general, anyway. I made calls on the governor, I made calls on the mayor, the head of Dade County.

Q: Were you down there by yourself, John?

CRIMMINS: Harvey Sum came down a little later as my deputy, and when I left, Harvey took over. As the Cuban question faded in immediate importance, particularly, of course, after the assassination of President Kennedy, the need for the presence became less and less. Harvey came back, I guess, and the office was closed in late '64, early '65. In part, this was an economy move. It served a very useful purpose while it existed, but it was a terribly interesting assignment, as you can imagine.

Q: Since you cautiously raised the Kennedy assassination, as you know, there have been myriad conspiracy theories about that assassination and possible Cuban involvement in it, or one of the reasons for it being, in fact, some of the things we had done or permitted against Cuba. Do you find any of those theories plausible or persuasive?

CRIMMINS: Certainly not persuasive. I think they are plausible in this sense. As it later developed, the agency-Dez Fitzgerald, particularly-was involved, at Bobby Kennedy's behest, in these half-baked schemes about assassination. This was very closely held. I, as the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, did not know anything about this. I thought I knew all the covert activities that were taking place, but I did not know about that, nor did anybody else.

Just as a historical footnote, when the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs Office was set up, there was a provision in the decision memorandum that established it, creating what was called a policy group consisting of the coordinator, Cy Vance, and Dick Helms. Well, Cy Vance was, by this time, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, or maybe still Secretary of the Army; I forgot. But anyway, Vance and Helms did not attend meetings that I chaired. Joe Califano was Vance's deputy, and his military assistant was Al Haig, a lieutenant colonel at the time. Helms didn't attend, either, but Dez Fitzgerald, who was the operations director for Cuba particularly, but also for Latin America, came. So we used to meet in my office.

Q: Did Haig come, as well?

CRIMMINS: Yes, Haig came to those meetings. He was sort of a note-taker. He helped draft a lot of papers and he was very broad-gauged, very broad-gauged. As I said, he was a lieutenant colonel at that time. He was not a military aide, but military assistant to Joe, who was general counsel of the Army at that time.

Q: Did you ever imagine that one day he would be Secretary of State?

CRIMMINS: No, I didn't. I didn't. I didn't. In fact, I wrote a glowing recommendation that he be sent to the Army War College, and he wrote me a profusive thank-you letter. He was very good. He was very good. He wasn't so hard-nosed with respect to Cuba as he turned out later to be, you know, with all this business about going to the source and that kind of thing at the beginning of his tenure as Secretary of State.

Anyway, the plausibility arrests in the fact that these activities apparently were being carried out, directed at Fidel [Castro], while Fidel was retaliating for this in setting up the assassination. I don't believe this. I don't believe it at all.

Q: Because he presumably lacked the capacity to do it?

CRIMMINS: No. I don't think he would have done it.

Q: Out of fear of retaliation had it been known?

CRIMMINS: I think that, and I think he had a higher regard for Kennedy. I do. I think he had respect for Kennedy, Fidel did. I don't think it was in his interest practically or politically to do this. I was asked immediately by Alex Johnson, "Is there any evidence at all that the Cubans are involved in this?" And I said none that I could find. We checked with the bureau, and the bureau had no evidence at all.

Now I have trouble-perhaps this is just long, long acculturation in the establishment-but I have a great deal of trouble believing that the Warren Commission could have been fixed. So I'm prepared to accept the findings of the Warren Commission. There were so many conspiracy theories that have been advanced, that it's hard to take any of them seriously. As I say, there is some plausibility to this one, but one that does not extend to credibility.

Q: It doesn't ring true.

CRIMMINS: No, no, no.

Q: Aside from the assassination, what kind of activities were under the general auspices of the US Government?

CRIMMINS: I don't want to go into detail about it. I still feel bound. In general, there were exfiltrations and infiltrations of intelligence collectors. There was some sabotage carried out, non-lethal sabotage. This was a ground rule. At places there were accidents, and a couple of people were killed, but it was supposed to be non-lethal sabotage, some of it very inventive, none of which made any difference-pin pricks, really.

Q: Do you have any examples?

CRIMMINS: No, I don't think I could. Well, there were efforts to cripple rolling stock. There were efforts to short high tension lines, that kind of thing. Some of them worked and some of them didn't, but they were all minor-league stuff. I mean, they were pin pricks. We were convinced in the Department, shortly in the course of '63, that they were not worth the candle. They were doing more harm than good. They were not advancing the cause. The idea was to create economic conditions so that (A), Cuba ceased to be a model; (B), the impact upon the standard of living would be negative enough to increase disaffection with the regime. The usual litany of things that's used in all these cases, including the Nicaraguan case currently.

As I said, this was going on during the Kennedy period. In all my experience with the agency, there were two people I never really trusted, who I did not think played the game, you know, played square with the Department or with me. One of them was Shakley, who I never, never trusted, not then when I was dealing with him in Miami, and not later when he was Director of Western Hemisphere Affairs in the agency when I was Deputy Assistant Secretary in ARA.

The other one was Dez Fitzgerald. Dez was a very bright, very able guy, but he was very close to the vest. This classic problem of not asking the right question that everybody knows about-

Q: If you don't ask the right question, you don't get the right answer.

CRIMMINS: That's right. Even though they know what you want. He was expert at this. But I blame one specific thing on him that I thought was terrible. It did not involve Fidel or anything like that. It was a project that I and Alex Johnson fought bitterly, bitterly, did not want it to happen to at all, and were, in effect, overruled. I always blamed Dez for advocating this and being, in effect, the author of this proposal. Dez died back in 1950-something or other, suddenly, of a heart attack. It wasn't until probably 1984 that I learned from one of his assistants that he was as opposed to this as we were, but Bobby Kennedy was insisting on it.

Q: What was the project?

CRIMMINS: I can't describe it. It involved the use of a group of Cuban exiles to carry out certain activities autonomously. They would not be under direct US control, but would be given a sum of money to operate. We thought this was much too open, and we didn't trust the guy, the leader of the group. As things turned out, our mistrust was well placed. Let's put it that way. But I blamed Dez for that, and it was not his fault.

See, there were a lot of hostages to fortune given in the Bay of Pigs that weighed on the Kennedys like crazy. I mean, this was very emotional, as far as I could tell, with the Kennedys. Their obligation to the brigade, for example. A good deal of my effort in '63 was spent with Joe Califano, who did a great deal of this, because he was in the Army, of sort of defanging the returned brigade people, sending them to a series of US military training courses. This intended to keep alive the hope that they were going to go back sometime, but also to keep them busy. But principally to keep them busy. We would be under a heavy pressure from Bobby Kennedy's office, particularly, to take care of these people, which we did. Joe Califano did a tremendous job in setting up special courses at Benning for infantry training. Some of the exiles ended up in the US Army. One of the best of them was a senior staff officer in the 82nd Airborne when I was in the Dominican Republic, Oneda Oliva.

Q: What goes around comes around.

CRIMMINS: That's right. Yes.

Q: How did you perceive, as Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, the policy towards Cuba change after the assassination and in the early [President Lyndon] Johnson period?

CRIMMINS: In general, Johnson was not terribly interested in the Cuban question. During the Kennedy period, I used to get a call from McGeorge Bundy or one of his assistants every day about something, about some problem that they saw or didn't understand or something like that, and they would turn to me. This is one of the reasons to go back for the establishment of the coordinator's office. The White House wanted somebody that they could go to, whom they could, in effect, hold responsible for knowing what was going on in all the fronts, you see.

Under Johnson, the calls dropped down to probably once a week, and then maybe once every two weeks or once a month by '65, when I got out.

Q: Of course, Vietnam was beginning to become the single issue at that time.

CRIMMINS: That's right. That's the general thing, that Johnson was not interested. Now, the December after the takeover, December of '63, there was the Guantanamo water crisis, which a lot of people thought might be a test by Fidel of a new president.

Q: That was when he cut off the water.

CRIMMINS: Then we put the desalinization equipment in. I was at the White House when this happened, and I must say, LBJ was very, very cautious about this. He was not at all interested in posturing or taking a dramatic stand on this issue. I was very impressed by his restraint. The thing petered out, as you know. There were some anxious moments, because this was a really serious thing, we thought. But an unspoken *modus vivendi* was reached. He was very restrained. As I said, the thing settled down. He didn't act like a president whose mettle was being tested and felt that he had to be very macho about this.

Q: He was the president who had a lot of mettle and was not afraid to show it.

CRIMMINS: That's right. He was quite low key. He was very, very sensible, I thought. I used to see Kennedy at meetings often when I came back in '61 and was handling the Dominican Republic. We used to have a meeting at the White House about every ten days on the Dominican Republic. Kennedy was a very hands-on kind of person, as you know

Q: Yes.

CRIMMINS: You probably remember Phil Torre. Phil was my Dominican desk officer, and he used to come to meetings, too. We'd been all the way down. LBJ was the same way, in the sense that he asked very sensible questions, as had Kennedy. I thought Kennedy was terrific. I just thought Kennedy was just magnificent. Q: What about Bobby?

CRIMMINS: I didn't like Bobby.

Q: Was he untrustworthy, in your view?

CRIMMINS: I thought he was arrogant. He was simplistic. I guess we started off wrong, in the sense that he made a bad impression on me. One of the meetings on the Dominican Republic was held. I had done the briefing paper for the meeting. We were all there, [Robert] McNamara and everybody. Robert Murphy was Special Assistant to the President for the Dominican Republic at that time, very close to [Rafael] Trujillo and a very negative force, so far as I was concerned, but he was there. Everybody was there. Bob Woodward had just come back from Punta de l'Este and had a terrible cold. George Ball was the acting secretary, he was there. We were going along. This was a six months' action paper. The idea was, this was all key to moving the Trujillo out and moving what we called the moderate opposition into a position where they could come to power. Everything was going well. It was very animated, and Bob Murphy was saying, "No, no, no, you can't do this. You've got to stick with the Trujillo."

Q: Was this after the Trujillo assassination?

CRIMMINS: Yes. I took over in July of '61, but the assassination took place in May of '61. This was when Ramfis was running things, and Radames and the uncles were still there. This would have been August into September.

Well, anyway, things were going well. Then this guy came through the door of the Cabinet room, and he looked so young, and it was Bobby. He said to the whole group, "My God!" "Jesus Christ!" or something like that. "I just had lunch with the Secretary General of the Union Civica," which was the lead party in the moderate opposition. He said, "If we have to depend on people like that, we're in real trouble." And from that moment, the thing went downhill, let's say, in the "Let's try to live with the Trujillo," or, "Shouldn't we make some offers to the Trujillo?" kind of thing. It was a very instinctive unthought-out kind of reaction, it seemed to me. I think I said-I would like to think I said, anyway, "They haven't had experience for 31 years in political preparation and organization."

But anyway, then his role in the Cuban thing, I always thought was negative and, from my point of view, extremely secretive and, in many respects, unknowable. He was sort of a wild card, I thought, in the whole picture.

Q: Do you think that this was, relatively speaking, youth and inexperience? Or was it really his nature to do things that way?

CRIMMINS: I think it's probably both. I guess the current wisdom is that after the assassination, Bobby grew up and became much more, let's say, tolerant, compassionate, understanding. Whatever you want to call it. I found him to be none of those things in the brief encounters that I had with him. He was abrasive, unpleasant, arbitrary, and I was aware of his McCarthy ties and that kind of thing, so I didn't have a beginning favorable impression of him. I like to think that he did change before he died. I don't know. But I think that it was probably both. I think it was the arrogance of power, for one thing, and I think it was his personality, his persona, if you want to put it that way.

You seem to be interested in this question of the Kennedys. As I said, I was a great fan of the President. I thought the President was great. He was dynamic. I just felt that we were doing all the right things in those days.

Q: Do you think, John, that he went ahead with the Bay of Pigs thing kind of against his will or against his better judgment, or had he been convinced that that might work and this was the thing to do to solve the problem?

CRIMMINS: I was in Brazil at the time of the Bay of Pigs. I thought it was disastrous when I heard about it the first time in Brazil. But this is before it failed. I just thought it was a very bad mistake.

But anyway, my own belief-and this is colored by the regard I had for the President-I think he did it against his better judgment. I just wonder sometimes whether he was reluctant to take on all the vested interest that had been developed around this effort, whether he wasn't a little timid about challenging something that was well entrained.

Q: Meaning the agency, the Defense Department?

CRIMMINS: The Defense Department and the soft-on-Cuba, no-guts kind of atmosphere that becomes established, which certainly, I think, in recent years has been resurrected, you know, that you're not tough enough.

So I think that it was against his better judgment. My reading of the history supports this, but it's a debatable question, I can see, I can recognize.

Q: When did the intense involvement of yourself and the US really begin? With the assassination or before the assassination of Trujillo did it become tense?

CRIMMINS: As I said, I didn't come back from Brazil until July of '61, so that was two months after the assassination. I wasn't involved in the antecedents to the assassination, but I read the accounts. Henry Dearborn probably could tell you enough, more about the degree of involvement than I could.

I think the US involvement goes back to the 1959-60 period, when Trujillo was becoming more and more-what shall I say?-irrational, the attacks on Betancourt and the consequent sanctions that were levied by the OAS against him. We were very actively involved in that. In other words, there was a shift in the late '50s, so far as I could determine, from policy by passivity, to toleration of Trujillo. But the 1959-60 period marked a change.

Q: What was the situation you found when you walked into that office? What faced you?

CRIMMINS: What faced me was the continued presence of the Trujillo family in power, the rising sentiment in the Dominican Republic against the Trujillo as a consequence of the assassination, and a desire for a return to the establishment of an open society. The question was: how do you do this without running the risk of what was considered to be the threat of another Cuba in the Dominican Republic? Another Cuba then-and even now-is a part of a constant thread in US-Latin American policy. The idea was, from my point of view and, I guess, from the Department's point of view, that you work toward easing the Trujillo out. This effort revolved around Ramfis, who was considered to be the most powerful and the most dangerous member of the family. There were two sort of clownish uncles who were pretty sinister, but were limited in their authority and in their abilities. Radig1/2nas was too much of a playboy to be significant.

So I came in. Ed Valen, who was director of the office, said, "I'm all involved in the Cuban question. You're just going to have to take over the Dominican thing." He said this the first day I arrived. So I plunged into that and spent a good deal of the next two months concentrating on the Dominican Republic, trying to determine how we could move toward the removal of the Trujillo and the installation of a center force. That was sort of the task, and how to protect against the downside risk of a serious extreme leftist takeover.

At that time, there were two small parties--well, one fairly large party, the 14th of June Party that was to the left, and the PCD, the Communist Party of the Dominican Republic, which was a nonentity, but was a formal party with ties to Moscow. It was decided early on that we wanted to move toward a center solution so long as we avoided the downside problem. That took us until November to work out. There were various proposals made. George McGhee, who was running the Policy Planning Council at that time, was sort of heavily involved. I thought he was a nuisance, but he had clout and was imaginative and thoughtful. He was, in part, responsible for the idea of trying to get Ramfis out by guaranteeing him, in effect, some of his wealth, by setting up a foundation. I mean, there was some idea of setting up a foundation and sugar monies would go into this kind of thing. I've forgotten the details, but it was hotly debated and discussed. It was going to be proposed to Ramfis, but I think we drew back from that before it was ever launched.

In any event, as is always the case, immediate events shaped the way the policy came to fruition, namely Ramfis' summoning of two uncles, who had been, in effect, sent out as a gesture of good will, let's say, in July or August, by Ramfis. They'd been sent into golden exile. He called them back, and they came back. That was considered to be almost-not a provocation, but a readiness to have a confrontation. That's what it was.

John Hill was the consul general there. We had no diplomatic relations because of the sanctions levied in '60 by the OAS. John Hill was the consul general and did a fabulous job on the spot. He and I were in constant touch. We used the phone, which we had a daily changing code that we dreamed up, which we changed.

Q: Which would have horrified Security.

CRIMMINS: Yes. We did it. We had to do it, because in those days, communications were very slow. They were even a lot slower than they are now.

Q: And no secure phones.

CRIMMINS: No secure phones. So every day we'd send down a top secret telegram with a key and we would operate out of that.

So when things started to become tense in the middle of November and we thought there was going to be a showdown, the uncles were there, Ramfis was there, and the Trujillo, we deduced, were digging in their heels. John was putting pressure on [Joaquín] Balaguer, who was the president at the time, to speak up against the Trujillo and that kind of thing, as I remember.

Q: Balaguer was president at the time.

CRIMMINS: For four years. Well, about six or eight years, all told.

To cut through all of this and the details, you know, the hour-to-hour development isn't clear to me, but on a Friday, I guess it was the 17th of November, it became clear to me that we needed some demonstration, and I thought we should move the Ready PhibRon up.

Q: This is a military force?

CRIMMINS: The Ready Amphibious Squadron, it was called. It had a small aircraft carrier and a couple of destroyers, maybe a cruiser.

Q: Based in Puerto Rico?

CRIMMINS: Right. Based in Puerto Rico. It was called the Ready PhibRon.

So I went up to talk to Bob Woodward. This is important, because you asked for comments about how policy is made now and how it was made earlier. Bob was going out to lunch, and I said, "Bob, I think we should move the Ready PhibRon within steaming distance of Santa Domingo, because things are getting tense. We don't know what's going to happen and how much of a blood bath it's going to be if the Trujillo really dig in."

So he talked and asked me a lot of good questions and said, "Okay, this is just going to move it up within steaming. They're not going to be visible?"

I said, "No, they're not going to be visible."

So I picked up the phone and called OP-61 or 61A, or something like that, in the Navy, and said, in effect, "Move the PhibRon." And they said, "Fine." (Laughter) Cross my heart, this is the way it was done! The PhibRon started to move within an hour.

Then Saturday, the next day, things were getting tenser. John was reporting that there were all sorts of rumors about arrests and executions about to take place, and all the horror stories were beginning to surface. So he recommended, and I set up, two operations. The preliminary was that the Ready PhibRon would appear on the horizon off Santa Domingo in international waters. Then the two courses were (A) I think this is called Grasshopper. There would be a fly-by still over international waters of jets from Vieques, in Puerto Rico. The carrier had no aircraft. Well, I guess they had helicopters. The second operation was a flyover of San Isidro, which was the center of power of the Dominican armed forces. It was the Air Force base, but the Air Force then was like the Luftwaffe, had infantry and artillery and everything else. We set this up on a contingency basis, John and I.

On Saturday morning, I went up to talk to Bob about this, and said, "I think the time is coming to do this, but we need authority to do it." Ted Achilles, who was director of the operations center, which at that time was in its infancy, but it was supposed to be a very powerful element in the policy apparatus, was there. He was strongly opposed to these proposals. Bob said, "Let's go up and talk to the Secretary." So Bob Woodward, Ted Achilles, an Air Force lieutenant colonel named Manny Chavez, who had just come from the Dominican Republic, had been down there with John Hill as a military associate or something, couldn't be military attaché^{1/2}, but anyway, he had come back, and I went up to see the Secretary.

Q: Who was [Dean] Rusk.

CRIMMINS: Rusk. This is about 11:00 or 12:00, something like that. The Secretary listened to us and said, "Okay, I think this sounds reasonable. I'm going to have to talk to the President." We, of course, trooped out. The word came back that the President was at Bonham, Texas, for Sam Rayburn's funeral. He said he'd call as soon as he could. Then we went in, and the Secretary was looking at a Texaco road map of the Dominican Republic. (Laughter) Manny Chavez was talking and showing him where it would be necessary to land, things like that. The Secretary was an old infantry officer originally, you know, and wanted to know about beaches and that sort of thing.

The call came through from the President and we trooped out again. The Secretary called us back and said, "The President said okay. You can run Grasshopper, the fly-by over international waters, without further reference. But under no circumstances do you penetrate air space without specific further authorization from him."

So that was Saturday. I guess we sent a telegram to John saying this. Phil Torre and I came into the office at, I guess, 7:30 or 8:00 in the morning, set up in the front office of ARA-that was our headquarters-because they had more telephones than anybody else. About 11:00, I guess, John Hill came and said, "I'm going to see the President." We had made the PhibRon visible, and there were people cheering in Momalicon like crazy, and John was reporting. This was in all great jubilation in the city. John called about 11:00 on Sunday morning and said, "I think you should do Grasshopper." So 24 minutes later, the planes were flying back and forth out to sea.

Then about 2:00, Bob Woodward came in. I was on the phone to him all the time at home. Bob Woodward came in, and we had to get a plane to get the Trujillo out. They said they would come out.

Q: They had told Hill that they were willing to go?

CRIMMINS: Yes, and we found out by that time that Ramfis had already bugged out three or four days earlier. We didn't know. We did not know it.

So Bob called Wilbur Morrison, the Vice President for Latin American Pan American, and said, "We need a plane." Wilbur said, "Who's going to pay for it?" Bob said, "I don't know, but we need it." So he got a plane and they flew it to Fort Lauderdale, landed in Fort Lauderdale about midnight of that night.

Q: Who did pay for it?

CRIMMINS: I don't think it ever was paid for, because it was a terrible thing. The Department had no funds for this kind of thing, and Defense wouldn't do it, and the White House, you know, the military aides over there would never pay for anything like this. Bob wrestled with it for a while, and I think it just went away and Pan American gave up. Because Pan American was flush in those days.

So that was a great day in my Foreign Service career. But the point I want to make here is that the strategy was developed in the meetings in the White House, and everybody was aboard in that. The tactics, the execution of the policy and the tactics, devolved to a very low level, really. I mean, I was an office director and I had lots of leeway. I think all the bases were touched. But the stress I want to place is on the informality of the decision-making chain. It went up the chain perfectly sensibly. I think all the basic justifications for the policy were made in the course of going up through the chain.

Q: It sounds as though there wasn't a whole lot that was getting committed to paper in all of this. Is that right or not?

CRIMMINS: Well, there were telegrams to John Hill.

Q: But I mean staff studies or memos to the Secretary.

CRIMMINS: None of that. Exactly. That's my point. That's my point. Certainly no options papers.

Now, on the broad policy, there was certainly lots of papers, most of which were done in my office, subject to Bob Woodward's approval. Bob and Wym Coerr vetted them very, very carefully.

So it was this very simple, I think, clean operation. Historically, I don't know how much of this is written down, but enough of it to prevent distortion of what was going on. So that was November 1961.

After that, we had the big problem of transition to elections, and the provisional government was set up, the Junta. What was it called? Junta National-I've forgotten. This was the one that Donnie Reed was on. The Monsignor. Anyway, I've forgotten what it was called. The Council of State, that's what it was called. That was the provisional government which prepared for the elections in December of 1962. The Council was established in January of '62, and took office right after a sort of half-baked attempt by an Air Force chief of staff to pull a coup with, we suspected, Balaguer's acquiescence, if not encouragement. We were very negative toward Balaguer in those days.

So then the elections came. [Juan] Bosch was elected in the end of '62, took office in February of '63, at which time I was in Miami, so I was out of the picture.

Q: Let's move ahead a little bit to when you became ambassador to the Dominican Republic. Clearly there has to be some background on how we got into the intervention and whether you think that was well advised and necessary. Or was that an example of excessive reaction to the threat of another Cuba in the hemisphere and all that kind of thing? In retrospect, what is your opinion?

CRIMMINS: I was the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs at the time. My own view at that time is that this was unnecessary. The following developments in Cuba and Cuban activities, I found no evidence that the Cubans were involved in any way with the revolution of April of '65. So I was skeptical of the charges of 92 known communists in the group, in the constitutionalist camp, a figure which was later exploded, as far as I could tell. I thought it was just unnecessary.

I did not participate in the back and forth at all, and, in fact, became involved only when I was asked to head a task force in the operations center, to leave my job as coordinator and, along with Bob Sayer, run the task force. We had 12 hours on, 12 hours off. We swapped. We alternated. I was asked to do that the day the decision was taken to send the 82nd Airborne in. On that point, I was in the operations center at the time, got a call from Tom Mann, from the White House, telling me it had been decided at the big meeting that they had, that the 82nd Airborne would go to Puerto Rico. It would be at Rame Air Force base in a standby position. So as head of the task force, I made note of that and informed people.

Twenty minutes to half an hour later, I got a call from the NMCC, National Military Command Center, saying that the 82nd Airborne, the first brigade or whatever it was, would be airborne out of Fort Bragg for San Isidro in half an hour, or something like that. I said, "San Isidro?" I thought I was in the presence of a colossal error, you know, that they were supposed to go to Puerto Rico and here they were going to San Isidro.

Q: By mistake.

CRIMMINS: By mistake! By mistake! So I started making all these frantic telephone calls, and everybody was coming back from the meeting and they weren't available. Oh, it was terrible! I finally got hold of something, maybe Tom Mann again, maybe the Secretary himself, and said, "What about this? They say they're going to San Isidro."

He said, "Oh, yeah. After Tom called you, some of us went back to talk to the President, and then it was decided they would go to San Isidro."

But that whole operation was really weird. In my days in the operations center, I was convinced that the policy-making and policy execution apparatus of the US Government was stretched to the absolute maximum, really. It was just madness. It was just chaos.

Q: Because we didn't have the mechanisms to deal with this?

CRIMMINS: And there were so many actors and there were so many crossed wires and signals, volume of traffic. We used to have the traffic pile along the thing, and the military traffic would be about that deep in folded-up teletype paper. Oh, it was crazy! I had nothing to do with running the task force. I was just sort of a facilitator and switchboard, nothing to do with the policy thing, which was a whole other dimension. But I was concerned at that time that if there were ever another crisis in another part of the world, we wouldn't have been able to handle it.

Q: You couldn't handle more than one crisis at once.

CRIMMINS: That's right, of these dimensions, with military operations being conducted and the U.N. being involved and the OAS. LBJ was furious at Bobby Kennedy, because Bobby Kennedy said that, "In the missile crisis, we did it better. We consulted the OAS, and they didn't do this."

So I got a call from probably Walt Rostow in the White House, I guess, saying, "Get the records on the decision to go to the OAS in the middle crisis." In forty-five minutes they wanted it, because the President wanted to make a statement for television or something. So I got hold of a very efficient woman, blonde, on the seventh floor, who ran the special archives. I got hold of her and we went through the thing. Of course, 45 minutes went and we finally found it. Of course, the decision, as I remembered it, the decision was that, "We'll go to the OAS, and if they agree, fine. If they don't agree, we're going to do it anyway." (Laughter) A quarantine and that sort of thing.

So it was a little disingenuous. But by that time, the President turned to something else and had forgotten-or decided that he didn't want to do it. I guess he decided better about getting into a contest with Bobby Kennedy. He was furious about it, really furious, and it was a cheap shot, because maybe Bobby remembered it wrong. That would be the only positive explanation of that. I suspect it was disingenuous.

Then Ellsworth Bunker got involved and did his wonderful job down there. I was on the task force for about a week, I guess, a week, maybe ten days, and came back to finish out in Cuban affairs. This was '65. We had the big camadioca refugee movement, which was a big crisis, but it worked all right. You don't want to go into that, but it was the forerunner of the Mariel thing.

Q: We are still on the Dominican Republic. I think it would be useful to jump ahead now to your own period as ambassador.

CRIMMINS: I went down with the specific task of picking up the pieces and, as part of that, reestablishing communications with the constitutionalists, who, in many respects, were the bright hope of the future. There were a lot of young technical people who had been constitutionalists and who were important to, let's say, the development of the Dominican Republic. I got there in January 1966.

Q: Were any of the troops still there?

CRIMMINS: Yes, the troops were there until September of '66.

Q: Both US troops and the multilateral troops?

CRIMMINS: Yes, the Brazilians and the Paraguayans, Costa Ricans.

Q: Panamanians?

CRIMMINS: Were there Panamanians? They were all still there at that time.

Q: To interject a personal thing, was General Braga still there?

CRIMMINS: Braga was still there.

Q: He was a great friend of mine when I was in Brazil.

CRIMMINS: Braga had taken over from the primitive-oh, dear. I thought I'd never forget his name, the one who considered Ellsworth Bunker to be a communist. Really!

Q: That says something about the mentality of the Brazilians.

CRIMMINS: This is true. He considered Ellsworth to be [Spanish phrase, phonetically inessential uchio.] And Braga took his place. I want to say Olympio, but it wasn't Olympio. Anyway, he was the hard-liner, the simplistic type who looked upon all constitutionalists as reds. I mean, just by definition, communists. He was still there.

Of course, I made all my calls. I went down as DCM because the desire was that Tap would leave at a quiet moment, because there was concern that if he left in the middle of a crisis, this would reflect on him, but more importantly on the judgment of the White House, etc., etc., etc. It got a little sticky because I had my own DCM coming, Frank Divine, who arrived two weeks after I did. We made him a special assistant to the ambassador. He went to live with his wife and kids in the DCM house. I was staying in the guest wing of the residence, and there were all sorts of rumors about this. Given LBJ's temperament, it was impossible to acknowledge anything. (Laughter) So there were all sorts of white lies told about all of this arrangement.

I took over in April. From a substantive point of view, at that time [Hector] Garcia-Godoy was the provisional president, the head of the provisional government, and I had enormous respect for Hector Garcia-Godoy.

Q: What kind of person was he?

CRIMMINS: I used to describe him as the only modern political figure in the Dominican Republic. He was very well connected, came from a very good family, married well, had been, if I recall correctly, in the diplomatic service, but had a subtle mind and all the right instincts, I thought, and carried out a very delicate tight-rope act, caught between the pressures from us and the OAS, mostly us, and then the Dominican realities, the right to center and left in the Dominican Republic.

I found, when I got there, that there was a very strong bias against Garcia-Godoy in the embassy. I was in an awkward position, because, as DCM, I was reading and approving telegrams, and I didn't agree with the line that the embassy had been taking with respect to Garcia-Godoy, that he was weak and soft and really not very reliable.

Q: Who was political counselor at this point?

CRIMMINS: Jack Wilson. But Tap was very much involved in this. Tap was very good. Tap's feelings were hurt in this period. But anyway, I sort of would call people in and talk about this, and I thought Garcia-Godoy was doing a phenomenal job in the face of great difficulties. As it happened. Ellsworth Bunker agreed with that. In fact, he made a very graceful speech when he was leaving, about how he had misgivings about some of the decisions that Garcia-Godoy had taken or failed to take, and he said, "In every case, you were right and I was wrong," which was a very generous act on his part, but typical of Ellsworth. I have great regard for Ellsworth. We were very close.

Q: As everybody knows who has worked for him.

CRIMMINS: When the Secretary had given me my oral instructions, he said to me, "John, one thing I want you to know is . . ." Well, he sort of suggested that relations hadn't been good between Ellsworth and Tap. He said, "I know it's difficult. You'll be the chargé¹/₂ and maybe the ambassador." I want to come back to that point in a minute. "But I want you to know that if there's any difference between you and Ellsworth, Ellsworth is going to win every time." (Laughter) In other words, "We would support Ellsworth." I said, "I don't foresee any differences, but I get the message." And we never did. We were extremely compatible in every way, and we saw an awful lot of one another. He used to come in and out, be in for a week or ten days, and I guess we had lunch or dinner every day while I was there.

Q: What was the agency doing there at this time, and what was the military doing? What were your relations like with them?

CRIMMINS: First the agency. This was 1966. The agency was still more or less in its social justice phase, with the Cord Meyer effort. They had some people there that had been trained in the Costa Rican school, and they were preparing for the election. Basically, they were collecting information, and there was a lot of maneuvering going on.

Q: But the agency and the embassy weren't at odds on policy at all?

CRIMMINS: No, no. No, no.

Q: That happens later.

CRIMMINS: Yes. David Phillips was the station chief, and Jim Flannery was his deputy. I had a terribly high regard for Dave Phillips, who was invaluable, really, and who was a very good, straight-shooting guy, as was Flannery. So I had no problems with the agency at all.

One of the things they, of course, were particularly interested in was Bosch's security. This is before the elections of June 1966, and Bosch and Balaguer were the candidates. Bosch felt that he couldn't campaign publicly because of threats against him, and I was always of two minds about that. I hoped that he would get out, but could understand why he wouldn't, because nobody could guarantee that there wouldn't be people taking potshots at him. We provided close-in security for him often. He would call me when he would be alarmed about something, and we would reinforce the guards around his place, or something like that.

Q: We were discussing the Dominican Republic and you as chargé¹/₂, then ambassador, and your relations with the American military and with the Dominican military, which were, of course, critical, also, in the situation that prevailed.

CRIMMINS: With respect to the agency, there was never any policy difference between the embassy and the agency, or between Ellsworth and the agency. They were disciplined and responsive, and I'm absolutely satisfied that no actions were undertaken by the agency that we had not been approved in Washington and by us in the Dominican Republic.

With respect to the military, I inherited a couple of attaché¹/₂s who were extremely biased against the constitutionalists, in favor of the hard-liner military, and who were very skeptical of Garcia-Godoy and his attitudes. They left in good time. I was counterbalancing them with an extremely able Marine colonel who was head of the MAAG, military assistance and advisory group, a fellow named Joslyn. Van was a pillar of strength, extremely responsive to direction, absolutely reliable. The two attaché¹/₂s who were, let's say-I hate to use the word "unreliable," but needed supervision. Let's put it that way. Needed close supervision. They had their tours ended, and they left quickly and their replacements were much more open-minded, much broader-gauged. Of course, the situation had changed. The tensions were reduced. The elections were held.

Is that enough about the military?

Q: Yes.

CRIMMINS: The Dominican military were a continuing problem, because there was disaffection within the military and there were constant alarms and excursions about plots against Garcia-Godoy, and then after Balaguer's election, even against Balaguer, even though Balaguer had been close to many of the military in the Trujillo period.

One of the great, great disappointments with respect to the Dominican military was our inability to modernize the military and to help, let's say, in the fading away, through retirement, attrition, in general, of the troglodytes. This was only partly successful. But to go back to the alarms and excursions that I referred to, there were varying intensities to these alarms and excursions. A couple of times they were very serious. One involved Elias Wesson, who now is Balaguer's secretary of defense. Wesson was clearly plotting against Balaguer, and we helped scotch that. Another plot was emerging from the Air Force, I think the Air Force chief of staff.

To illustrate what the relationships were, I invited all the senior military to lunch one day in the middle of these rumors. The particular object was this full colonel who was the chief of staff, who, it turned out, was a great baseball fan. When we were having treats, we were talking statistics about home runs in the dead-ball period and the live-ball period, that kind of thing. (Laughter) Then at the lunch, I offered a toast to President Balaguer, full of our support to President Balaguer, in effect, against all threats, foreign and domestic, civil and military, and that sort of thing. Well, it worked. The guy was eventually eased out and given some other job somewhere without any elements of strength to it. But it was a constant--well, it faded after '67, I guess. I was there from '66 to '69.

The principal effort post-election was the development of the Dominican Republic. We had an enormous AID mission and an enormous AID program, enormous in terms of the size of the country.

Q: Except for the Brazil experience, your previous experience had been largely political.

CRIMMINS: That's right.

Q: Did you feel that you were prepared to manage an effort of that size?

CRIMMINS: I did.

Q: Were there problems getting it up to speed?

CRIMMINS: I had very good people. Morrie Taylor was my economic counselor, and Alex Fourfur was my AID mission director, and Larry Harrison was his deputy. They were very, very good. Morrie had been a Treasury attaché^{1/2}, was a very well-trained economist, and was a first-class instructor for me. Larry Harrison was good, too.

Q: Both Alex Fourfur and Harrison were highly operational types.

CRIMMINS: That's right. I never had any problems with it. Let me say this. This is going to sound self-serving, but one of the basic points about policy and the execution of policy in what you call the trenches that impressed me enormously when I became chargé and chief of mission was the power of the ambassador in the field. It's really enormous. Enormous. I mean, people complain about diplomacy over the heads of the ambassadors and that, to a degree, is true. It depends on the region. I think it's more true in Europe than it is in Latin America. But I think any ambassador worth his salt has no excuse for not being able to run a cohesive, tight operation and to keep potential freelancers in line. The basic letters still remain the same.

Q: Even considering the existence of the back channels and all that?

CRIMMINS: That's right. Yes, I do. I think that the back channels can be monitored and, of course, you have to impress yourself upon the operators of the back channel that you won't brook-

Q: As you said earlier, you have to know the right questions to ask.

CRIMMINS: That's right. That's right, and more in the field, Ashley. In my experience, a chief of station, for example, who does not level with an ambassador would be replaced immediately. I wouldn't stand for this. This is the difference, you see. Let's say an assistant secretary in ARA doesn't have one-tenth of the operational power with respect to other agencies that an ambassador in the field does. I'm not trying to equate the two in terms of function or constitutional authority, but in terms of day-to-day operations, an ambassador has a mandate in terms of the 1962 letter, that provides the opportunity for him to exercise every necessary control.

Now, in the case of Chile, just to run ahead, Ed Korry was kept in the dark about track two, just the way Charlie Meyer and I and Alex Johnson and Secretary Rogers were. This kind of thing. These are exceptional circumstances. They're in straight line with the Bobby Kennedy, Dez Fitzgerald kind of thing we saw, and the Nixon-Chile thing and then Ollie North business, part of a chain of history.

Q: Sort of a transcendental track two.

CRIMMINS: That's right. In my experience, I have never run into a situation in the field, even the Dominican Republic or Brazil, as chief of mission, ambassador, that I did not feel that I was capable of ascertaining the answer to any question that I put, and, moreover, was the beneficiary of candor on the part of potentially maverick elements of the embassy. There was one attaché in Brazil that went off the deep end, but that was a special case.

To go back to the Dominican Republic, the relations with the US military and the agency, I told you about. With respect to the Dominican Republic, I touched on our relationship with the Dominican military, a relationship that was greatly assisted by the very fine work of Van Joslyn, the Marine colonel who was the head of the MAAG, who had a particularly effective relationship with the Secretary of Defense, Peres C. Peres, and who was an absolutely faithful executor of tasks that were put to him by me and by Frank Divine as the DCM and the chargé d'affaires when I was in there.

So you had the elections. The development effort was central during the rest of the period. I had very good people, had a huge staff. We started to cut it down right away after the elections. By the time I left in '69, it was probably half of the size that it started. Just to illustrate the problem, when I took over, there were 26 legal attachés in the embassy, FBI types. (Laughter) They were very happy. They were down to two in a couple of months, and down to one very shortly thereafter. They were happy. They were sent when LBJ was desperate for information about what was going on in the Dominican Republic.

To continue with the development thing, not only were we providing funds into the AID program, but we were giving the Dominican Republic special treatment on the sugar quotas. This was a hard fight with Washington on the sugar quotas, particularly. It was easy to get AID money, which was slow disbursing, but the sugar money was right there. We had a tremendous fight in Washington-Linc Gordon, particularly-on devaluation of the Dominican peso.

Q: Did Washington oppose it?

CRIMMINS: No, wanted it. Insisting on it.

Q: The mission opposing it.

CRIMMINS: The mission opposing it. We won out, but it was a very hard-fought issue.

Q: Why did you oppose it? On the grounds that it really wouldn't do that much?

CRIMMINS: On two grounds. The first one was political. This goes back to Dominican history. Trujillo, shortly after he took power, regained control of customs revenues. In the '20s, the peso had dropped from par and there were terrible troubles and political troubles, and this was imbedded in the Dominican psyche that if the peso were not at par with the dollar, then everything was going to collapse.

Balaguer and his economic advisors, such as they were, were convinced-totally convinced-that the government would collapse if they devalued the peso. We agreed with that. We agreed that that was probably a 60-40 probability. I was very given, in my career, as you may remember, to specific percentage figures for chances. (Laughter)

Q: I do remember.

CRIMMINS: Economically, Morrie Taylor and the AID program office, which had a group of economists, too, argued that the benefits of devaluation were theoretical, that the disequilibrium was so fundamental as it appeared-and we did a big, big, big, huge effort in this direction involving John Ferch, who was consul in Santiago de los Caballeros in the north, and who we knew was a trained economist, so we brought him down as part of the team. He had a significant input into this effort. At the very least, we raised enough doubts among the economists in Washington about the true necessity for the devaluation, that they did not press. Balaguer used to plead with me not to press them on this. There was no vested interest in the-you know, it was visceral and instinctive and very, very real. Very, very real.

So then there were alarms and excursions, as I said, about coups.

Q: Let's move on with the time we have left today, John, to the question that we touched on a little bit when the machine wasn't on, and that was that the whole Dominican experience was a major success for you as foreign policy, as it is sometimes viewed as being in popular mythology, and whether it was a success for the Dominican Republic itself. Where do you come down on this?

CRIMMINS: In the first place, with respect to the Dominican Republic itself, on its face, the evolution suggests that it was successful, that there was an election and that Balaguer stayed. In the successive administrations of Balaguer, there were human rights accusations made against him, about which I really don't have first-hand information. But anyway, there was an election. Then eventually, in '78, of course, there was the election of [Antonio] Guzmán and a transfer of power, under considerable pressure, I understand, from Washington, specifically President Carter.

Q: I was personally involved with that, because I was Director of Caribbean Affairs.

CRIMMINS: That's right. Did Carter actually call Balaguer?

Q: Yes.

CRIMMINS: I thought so. That was a great operation, incidentally. I had retired then. This was in August of '78?

Q: '78, yes.

CRIMMINS: I had retired earlier in the year. So congratulations.

Q: Following up your good work.

CRIMMINS: Anyway, the question that you never can answer, this was an "if Lincoln hadn't been shot" kind of thing, the question is: would this have been substantially different if Bosch had not been overthrown or if Bosch had won the election? If Bosch had not been overthrown, if the intervention had not occurred and Bosch had been restored as president, there would have been bloodshed, continuing bloodshed, and that is a plus. The bloodshed was stopped-or minimized, anyway. That's always good and, I think, sometimes lost sight of, but stopping the killing is always good.

You can't answer the question of what would have happened if there had been no intervention. At that time, I did not consider Bosch to be an extreme leftist at all. He was a very difficult, difficult guy, and I had dealt with him in '61 and '62 when I was running Caribbean and Mexican Affairs. He was a prima donna then and not really a modern figure any more than Balaguer was a modern figure. But he would have had another left-of-center government. We have a terrible time with left-of-center governments in the Latin American policy traditionally, and we tend to exaggerate the degree of left in the left-of-center rubric.

Q: Or even what left means.

CRIMMINS: Or what left means. That's right. It's a terrible problem.

So with respect to the Dominican Republic, there were some pluses, but the question is, to my mind: did the intervention bring about this, or would it have occurred in the normal course? But to me, there was a very powerful negative in the intervention, and that is the reaction in other parts of Latin America to it.

Q: "Here we go again."

CRIMMINS: Yes. "Here we go again." To me, the Dominican intervention of 1965, in effect, removed the OAS as a potential useful instrument of US policy, because there was an unspoken- in some places, spoken-Latin American attitude, "Never again are we going to be caught in this trap, and never again are we going to validate a US intervention after it's occurred," which is what the OAS, in effect, did.

Q: It did it for the second time, because it really did it in the case of Cuba, too, in the missile crisis.

CRIMMINS: The missile crisis was, let's say, a clear and present danger. This was a very fuzzy, fuzzy thing. I guess I've said this before, that I didn't believe that there was a threat from the left.

Q: From Cuba.

CRIMMINS: From Cuba. Absolutely. Okay. That undoubtedly affects my judgment. But on the broad effects with respect to policy toward Latin America, I think were totally negative-totally negative. The fact that there was absolutely no hope for the Vance initiative-I guess it was '78 or '79, this idea that was floated of setting up a peace force in Nicaragua to separate the thing-it never got off the ground. I attribute this directly to the Latin American experience and reaction to the Dominican intervention, that they simply were not going to do this.

Q: Our current troubles in Panama reflect this.

CRIMMINS: Exactly! This is what I mean by the "never again" syndrome that afflicts Latin America. People have said, in meetings that I've attended, "We did this so nice and cleanly in the Dominican Republic. It was such a great success. Why don't we just do that in Nicaragua?"

Q: We did do it in Grenada.

CRIMMINS: Exactly. That, to me, was almost despicable, the Grenada thing. It's abuse of great power.

So I think that the results of the Dominican Republic are ostensibly good. The question is: would they have come about without an intervention? Would the Dominican Republic have gone downhill if the intervention hadn't occurred? I don't think that a case can be made either way, really.

Q: Conclusively.

CRIMMINS: Conclusively. On the broader international implications, I think it was pretty near disastrous, really.

[Session Number Two, May 30, 1989, begins]

Q: John, you were talking very extensively-in fact, most of the last session-about the Dominican Republic and your experience in the Dominican Republic as DCM, charg \ddot{e} ½, then ambassador serially and consecutively. You alluded a couple of times to Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker. I wonder if you could clarify exactly what Ambassador Bunker's role was with respect to the Department and the White House, on the one hand, in the Dominican Republic, on the other, and how you related to him in your several positions.

CRIMMINS: Ellsworth's formal position was that of ambassador to the OAS. In that capacity, he was chairman of the special committee in the Dominican Republic set up under the meeting of consultation in 1965. There were three members of that committee, one the Brazilian permanent representative, and the second was a Salvadoran, Cl \ddot{e} ½mon Duanius, as I remember. Ellsworth was the third member and chairman of the group. This special committee, in effect, was delegated by the meeting of consultation, who handled the Dominican problem. They were the action group. In terms of Ellsworth's responsibilities to the United States Government, Ellsworth, in effect, was the personal representative of the President. He was close to LBJ as a result of the Dominican operation. I don't think they were close before. But he was, in effect, ultimately responsible to the President in a way akin to that of a regular ambassador, but even more so.

I think perhaps the best way I could define the relationship between him and me is to say that when I was leaving for the Dominican Republic in January of '66, with the understanding that I would become charg \ddot{e} ½ very shortly after I got there, Dean Rusk, the Secretary of State, told me that he wanted me to understand that if there were any differences of opinion between me and Ellsworth Bunker, Ellsworth would win. I told the Secretary that I didn't think there would be any problems and, indeed, there were none. We saw eye to eye on practically everything and had what I considered to be an excellent relationship. He didn't get involved in the operations of the embassy in any way, and with respect to the peace force, I was, of course, there all the time, and he was in and out.

When I took over in April, his role was phasing out. He was phasing out of the thing because the election was coming up, and the peace force was to leave in September. So he would come down. From April to the time of the departure of the peace force, I imagine he was down there four or five times, and he would be there for three or four days at a time, often with Harry Shlaudeman, who was sort of his special assistant, at the time.

He had been involved, of course, since the very beginning of the intervention and had been instrumental in negotiating the act of reconciliation and the institutional act, sort of the basic constitutional documents under which the provisional government operated.

Does that clarify this?

Q: Yes.

CRIMMINS: I think perhaps I should just flesh out or clarify the reference to my conversation with Dean Rusk. Rusk intimated to me, without coming out flatly and saying this, that there had been a certain amount of-"friction" is too strong a word-sort of discomfort between Ellsworth and Tap Bennett. It was very vague. His comment to me obviously was intended to forestall any such situation.

Q: Bennett was a rather flamboyant character in some ways.

CRIMMINS: Well, I wouldn't call Tap flamboyant. That's one of the last words I would call Tap. No, Tap was very correct, I would say. But anyway, okay, so much for Ellsworth. Ellsworth was a great man. I say that unreservedly.

Q: I think everybody shares that view. I certainly do, based on his work in Panama. I wasn't there at the time, but I studied it a lot. Remarkable man.

CRIMMINS: Yes.

Q: Let's move on, John, to your return to the United States, when you became lead deputy assistant secretary in ARA. How did that come about? I assume it was a direct outgrowth of your work in the Dominican Republic.

CRIMMINS: I don't know. I was called up to Washington to see Charlie Meyer, who was, I guess, at that time the assistant secretary designate. I don't think he had been confirmed by the Senate yet. He told me he wanted me to take that job and asked me would I do it, and I said, sure, I'd do it. I hadn't known Charlie at all before, but as it turned out, we got along extremely well. Charlie is a very, very fine guy.

So I came up in April, and for five or six months thereafter, I was, for all practical purposes, the only deputy. Bob Hurwitch, who was in Laos, I think, at that time, came aboard in September, if I recall. Dan Szabo, who was the economic assistant secretary, came sometime in the late summer, which would have meant that I was there by myself. Charlie was away for a lot of that period because he was making sort of courtesy trips around the hemisphere. I find that hard to believe, but I can't remember who would have been there.

Q: This was 1969.

CRIMMINS: This was 1969. We never had more than three deputies-Hurwitch, Szabo, and me. I know that Bob didn't come until September.

Q: Of course, that was a period in which office directors functioned with a much broader mandate than they had done in recent years. Would you care to comment on that? Do you agree with that?

CRIMMINS: I don't know what their mandate is now. From my reasonably good opportunities to observe the situation now in the Department, since sporadic opportunities, but when they occur, they're fairly close in, I don't see a significant difference between what they were doing when I was in ARA and what they're doing now. Of course, there are many more deputy assistant secretaries now. I think Elliott Abrams had six or something like that.

Q: Either the office directors are doing nothing or the deputy assistant secretaries are doing nothing.

CRIMMINS: That's right. With one exception, who shall nameless, I had extremely good country directors. I relied on them a great deal. We broke down, essentially, when everybody was aboard. Bob Hurwitch had first-instance responsibility for everything north of South America, including Guyana. I had first-instance responsibility for South America and all functional things. Of course, when Charlie was away, as he was often, I was the acting assistant secretary. Dan Szabo, who was not a career officer, handled economic matters, but required lots more supervision from me than Bob Hurwitch did. So with respect to the office directors, the country directors, they were terribly important. Of course, moreover, they had AID deputies. In one case, in the case of Central America, we had an AID country director, office director, and a Foreign Service deputy.

So the whole arrangement was one that gave, as you indicated, the office director a great deal more authority, if only because of his oversight of the AID programs. This is gone completely now-in that sense, certainly. When I said they didn't seem to be so different, I was thinking of State Department functions, the political side. When you think of the AID side in those days, their span with very broad.

Q: Back to back and belly to belly.

CRIMMINS: That's right. I thought that worked very well. AID obviously was very unhappy with it, and I think some people in the Department were, for reasons I never understood.

Q: Probably the people who couldn't understand economics. (Laughter)

CRIMMINS: Maybe. Would you agree that the office directors liked it?

Q: Yes. I was later, as you know, Director of the Office of Caribbean Affairs, and at that time the office director no longer ran the AID side, but they were still co-located and worked very closely together. Even that, I thought, was a much more successful way of doing it than later, or much earlier, when they were entirely separate.

CRIMMINS: I have to repeat that I had awfully good office directors. They did a first-class job.

Q: Let's move on to issues, John. This is a time when the whole Chile thing is coming to a head. Would you like to review that? Who was ambassador in Chile at that time?

CRIMMINS: Ed Korry. Of course, the Chile problem arose when [Salvador] Allende narrowly won the election of September 1970. There had been discussion about covert political action in Chile in support of one of the other non-Allende candidacies. It was decided, with everybody agreeing to this, with very little dissent, that it simply wasn't a good idea, it wouldn't make that much difference, it was dangerous-for any number of reasons, we decided the most we could do was to do what I would call now "gray propaganda." That is the USIA kind of stuff, but without attribution to us-posters and getting out the vote, that kind of thing. I think a total of \$300,000 was involved.

Accompanying and affecting that decision was an inter-agency agreement that was reached, as I remember, in August of 1970, that in the event of an Allende win, the world was not going to come to an end, and that we should sort of live with that situation, we should depend upon the democratic traditions and the intense political culture of the Chileans to work this out over time, and that there was another election down the line. I chaired all these meetings, and the paper was sent forward to the White House from the IG. We thought we had done a thoroughgoing job on it.

I came back from leave, I think a couple of days after the election in Chile, and the White House had gone ape about this-ape. They were frantic, just beside themselves. All sorts of recriminations started about, "Why didn't we do something about this? This is terrible. This is the end of the world." It went so far as to have people say, "This is going to affect the congressional elections of 1970 in the United States." How, I never was able to figure out. Of course, it didn't have any effect whatsoever.

The upshot of all of this was that track two started in the White House.

Q: Track two being covert activity.

CRIMMINS: Covert activity, trying to prevent the election in the congress of Allende, which failed. And then this business that wasn't intended to, but eventually ended up on the Schneider business, the killing of General Schneider. But I left, I remember a terribly grim, grim, grim meeting on a Sunday, one of the early Sundays, in my office. We had the head of the Western Hemisphere branch of the agency, Viron (Pete) Vaky. Charlie Meyer was there. Jim Gardner, who was the INR officer for coordination, and somebody else. Who would it have been?

This was, in effect, a discussion among us about resisting the White House pressure to do something drastic in Chile. Pete was there, and I felt terribly sorry for him because he obviously was under terrible pressure, I assume from Henry, about this. He was always saying, "Let me be the devil's advocate here," and it was a very uncomfortable role for him, but he played it very loyally. The rest of us were strongly opposed to any serious effort to interfere with this.

I don't know whether this was a consultation with the bureaucracy, one final consultation, or it was pro forma or whatever it was, but we ended up, as I recall, standing pat, essentially. I don't know what happened at the White House then, but presumably this was fairly close to the adoption of track two between Kissinger, the President, and Dick Helms.

Somewhere about the middle of September, I had to leave ARA and chair a very senior promotion board. I wanted to get out of it, but Charlie didn't want me to. He thought that I should go ahead and not upset the system. I tried for about ten days to be at the board during the day and then come back at 5:00 or thereabouts and try to work on the thing, but it was impossible, because it soon became evident that I was causing more problems than helping. Somebody had to brief me, and that took them away from doing something else, and things were just absolutely frantic. I decided that I was an impediment rather than a help.

So I came back to the Chilean thing about Thanksgiving time, after the board. By that time, a lot of the craziness had gone, although they were still making noises at the White House about squeezing Allende. Of course, we had started economic sanctions by that time.

I thought they were still pretty far, the White House, the pressures from the President, and Al Haig was involved at this time, too. Al Haig was Henry's deputy.

Q: They were looking at this in the White House in strictly Cold War terms?

CRIMMINS: Yes.

Q: The domino theory and so on.

CRIMMINS: Yes, despite Henry's famous dictum of, "Chile is a dagger pointed at the heart of the Antarctic," that kind of thing. The first evidence I had of how the White House was reacting was early on when Henry gave a backgrounder, as I remember-this is all very vague in terms of sequence with me-gave a backgrounder, one of his backgrounders, at the White House, in which he waxed very gloomy about this, that this was the end of the world in Chile. His line was in keeping, actually, with his view that once a country went communist, it was gone forever, an approach that he revealed again in Portugal in '74, '75.

Anyway, we in the Department-and I include Alex Johnson and Charlie and myself in this-were totally unaware of track two, as was Ed Korry. We were operating on what I recall as reasonable approaches to the situation-that is, you know, suspending [unclear] Bank credits and guarantees and that kind of thing, trying to prevent multilateral financial institutions' operations. You know, economic denial would have been the approach. That's what it finally settled down to about the turn of the year, 1970-71.

We continued along those lines pretty much for the rest of the time I was in ARA. We were dealing with Orlando Letelier, who was the Chilean ambassador for almost all the time, as I recall. All of us in ARA-that would include John Fisher, the country director, Charlie, and I-all had very good opinions of Letelier. We thought he was a straight shooter and that he was not misleading us or misleading his government about our attitude.

We reached a point in the spring of '73 where Jack Hennessy, who was the Assistant Secretary for International Affairs in the Treasury, and I were negotiating with Claude Omira Almeda, who was the Chilean foreign minister, a socialist, and, of course, Letelier, trying to find a way of getting a third party involvement in the expropriation questions, the view on our side of getting a settlement, of course, but also in the process of resuming some kind of reasonably normal economic relationship with the Chilean government. We thought we were making progress. Jack Hennessy and I used to say to one another, "This is great if it works, but can we get it through the White House?" This was the problem. As it turned out, that was moot because Almeda and Allende could not sell it to the very hard-liners in the Chilean government, and it frittered away.

I left ARA in the end of May or June of '73, and with respect to the coup, certainly while I was there, we were not involved in the promotion of a coup, and I doubt very much that anything happened between June and September of '73, when I was getting ready to go-

Q: By "we," do you mean the State Department or the US Government?

CRIMMINS: The US Government as a whole.

Q: You believe there was no involvement at all?

CRIMMINS: No. In the coup, no. I'm prepared to accept the denials about the coup. As I say, we were not coup-bent during my watch. I mentioned in the earlier session, I think, there were a couple of people in the agency that I never really felt comfortable with nor had full trust in, and one of them was operating at this time in the Chilean thing. We had very strict rules, for example, about dealing with one of the right-wing groups in Chile, which really was semi-fascist, and they were to be strictly off limits. This guy kept raising the utility of dealing with these people because they were effective and they had all sorts of contacts and they could keep the opposition alive and that kind of thing. We kept saying, "No, under no circumstances." I always wondered how far, really, they were going with this group, but this did not necessarily imply a coup relationship; this was other political action that the agency person was interested in.

Q: So we weren't material witness, even, in the coup. It was strictly home-grown and internal?

CRIMMINS: So far as I know. As I say, up until the time that I left in June, we were not stimulating or organizing a coup. There were intelligence reports of people plotting and that kind of thing, but to my knowledge, we were not involved-I repeat-in encouraging or stimulating a coup. I doubt that in the June to September period after I left that this occurred. In other words, I accept the denials that have been made about this period, and I think that the Church Committee, if I recall correctly, came to pretty much that same conclusion. Is that right?

Q: Yes, I think you're right. I don't mean to become obsessed with this or press you with this.

CRIMMINS: Please do.

Q: What do you, therefore, have to say about the very considerable body of literature that's developed since, which purports to show that the CIA or the Pentagon or all kinds of people were, in fact, up to it up to their elbows?

CRIMMINS: I think that this is supposition, extrapolation from a base of involvement, and sometimes a paranoia about the agency and about the US Government. We're supposed to have been involved in a lot of things that we were never involved in. But you said, "I don't want to press you." Please press me, because my recollection has to be refreshed about these things. If there are specific points that you have-

Q: This is your interview and not mine.

CRIMMINS: No, but in the interest-

Q: Let me say that I'm relieved and happy to hear what you have to say, because looking back on that same period, as you know, I was in the White House initially as one of Vaky's assistants and then working for _____ off, who was the Latin American guy in the White House. I've asked myself many times since how I could have been sitting at the center of a supposed conspiracy and been totally unaware of it, as I certainly was.

CRIMMINS: Yes. The White House did this very well. I mean, the track two connection with the Congress and buying off Congress and all the efforts to do all that kind of thing, that was done without the knowledge, as I said, of very senior people in the Department. I'm sure that the Secretary, who was Rogers at that time, knew. If anybody would have known about it, Alex Johnson would, and he did not, I'm satisfied. And Charlie did not. I was away at this time, but I did not. I asked about this when I came back, when all of this came out, and I was satisfied that it was a complete blank so far as the Department was concerned. Certainly Ed Korry didn't know about it.

Q: The paranoia about what was going on in Chile, which undoubtedly existed at the time, did that flow mainly from Henry Kissinger or mainly from the President?

CRIMMINS: I think from the President. I think from the President, really, in the first instance, although I don't know this for a fact. But I suspect that Henry did very little to dissuade him from this. Everybody was caught up in this.

I remember-what was going on? Charlie was away. I was in New York on the U.N. or something like this. I've forgotten what it was. Bob Hurwitch had to go over to a meeting of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board on Chile, and Bob had not been involved in this in any significant way. We kept one another informed and in broad strokes, and Bob had to sit there and take all sorts of screaming denunciations from highly placed political figures on the advisory board, Nelson Rockefeller being paramount among them, about how stupid it was not to have intervened in the election in the first place, and why wasn't it done. "It's incredible and stupid," and all this sort of stuff. Bob very manfully gave all the right rebuttals. But they were foaming at the mouth.

Looking back on it, it was absolutely so unnecessary, and I think if we had stuck to the position, if the White House hadn't just turned things around, if we had stuck to the position of August, you know, "We can live with this and we won't do Allende any favors, certainly," but we'll have a cool but correct-and that may have even been in the language of the final memorandum; I don't know, something like that, we would have ended up ahead. We expected that Allende would run into very serious economic difficulties, and that he could probably barely hang on until the election.

Q: The corollary to your conclusion that the coup was mainly homegrown is that the coup would have happened anyway, but we would have been clean.

CRIMMINS: Yes. You see, to go back to your question of why has there been this body of literature suggesting a very close involvement on our part, and I gave some of the reasons, but in addition to those, it seems to me, the whole attitude toward the Nixon Administration, the Vietnam policy, the whole thing, would have stimulated this kind of negative supposition inevitably.

So I don't think that the Chilean policy was anything that anybody can take very much pride in, but I do think that the Department's position consistently-and this goes all the way up to the top, and Korry's position-was much more professional, much more sensible, and would have been much more successful in the end than the policy that was followed. As I say, from the first part of '71 to the time I left, Chile was a nagging problem, and we were certainly following the line of not doing Allende any favors. We adopted an economic denial posture and we wanted to weaken him, but I am satisfied in my own mind that the coup itself was homegrown.

Anything else in Chile to discuss?

Q: No, let's change countries. This is a time when two other issues, which occupied the attention of a lot of commentators and writers since, were sort of getting under way, and that's the dirty wars in Argentina and in Brazil. Do you have any thoughts on that subject that you would like to share?

CRIMMINS: Of course, in Argentina, the dirty war in earnest didn't start until 1973-74 with Perón. In Brazil, however, we had the severe repression that was going on.

Q: The Tupamaro thing in Uruguay was going on full blast.

CRIMMINS: Yes. We're talking about the 1969-73 period in ARA now. The coup that overthrew [Juan Maria] Bordaberry occurred when? In '72?

Q: I think so.

CRIMMINS: That was the beginning of the severe repression in Uruguay. Would that be right?

Q: That would be right.

CRIMMINS: The Tupamaros were very active. When was Mitrione kidnaped and killed?

Q: 1970.

CRIMMINS: That's right. Was that before or after Chile? Well, anyway, with respect to Brazil- -let's start with Brazil. The Institutional Act of December '69-wasn't that right? Was it December '69 or December '68?

Q: I think it was December '68.

CRIMMINS: Yes, '68. When I arrived in ARA, it was an issue. I, for one, was very concerned about the repression, and particularly our heavy involvement in our AID program. You will recall that we were providing, in effect, a balance-of-payments assistance to Brazil at the clip of about \$100 million-plus a year, which in those days was an awful lot of money. I was uncomfortable with this in light of the effects of Institutional Act number five and the full-fledged dictatorship that it represented and the increasing reports of torture and other abuses of human rights that were occurring.

We were getting all sorts of intelligence reports of torture being used against prisoners. It was interesting that the military was very reluctant to accept this.

Q: Our military.

CRIMMINS: Our military. Because they did not believe that the Brazilian Army was capable of doing this. It took quite a bit of convincing for them to accept the validity of the reports. The agency was very forthright about this. They were reporting straight all the time, and it was in almost all the reports establishing the widespread use of severe torture. This wasn't just electrical shocks; this was the real medieval stuff. It was the agency that established this. As I said, the military were sort of reluctant to do this.

Bill Rountree was the ambassador. He came up, I guess, in 1970 at some point, to testify on Brazil. There was a Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee hearing or set of hearings on Brazil, and Rountree came up. We had some discussion with him about not gilding the lily with respect to Brazil. But I think, in effect, he did. For some reason, I was not asked to testify. Charlie didn't testify that I know of. Bob Dean, who was a country director at the time, did testify briefly, I think, and had, of course, a lot to do with the preparation of the briefing papers for Rountree's appearance. But there was a reluctance, certainly on the part of Rountree, to make much of an issue of the increasing repression in Brazil.

We in ARA-I, with Charlie's approval-were moving toward stopping our AID program in Brazil. Eventually, in early 1973, we did stop it. We had another justification. It was at this time that Delfim Neto, the finance minister of Brazil, was boasting all over the world about how well the Brazilian economy was doing, and it certainly was, and how strong Brazilian reserves were. Well, it was, on its face, pretty absurd to be continuing balance-of-payments assistance to a country whose finance minister was boasting about the amount of foreign exchange reserves they had. So these two things coincided nicely, and we made a decision through the IG in early 1973 to make no further loans to Brazil. The pipeline at that time was almost a quarter of a billion dollars, as I recall-\$200 million, it was. So there was a lot to draw down and there were lots of problems, loans that were problems, that were not being disbursed. So I, in effect, arrived in Brazil having participated importantly in the decision to stop the program.

Q: This was when you became ambassador.

CRIMMINS: Yes. This was about six months before I became ambassador when the decision was taken. But that decision was powerfully influenced by the repression in Brazil.

Now, one thing that has to be borne in mind with respect to the whole human rights situation in this period and also in the period when I was in Brazil, is that the Congress was well in the lead of the executive branch on human rights matters. With AID, who, of course, wanted to continue the AID program-certainly the AID mission in Brazil did-one could point to the great difficulty of getting congressional approval for any continuation of AID programs as a reason for not going ahead. So this is the old business of using the Congress as the lever to get things done. Of course, with foreign countries, this was a common technique to say, "Unless you shape up, the Congress simply is not going to permit us to do such and such." In other words, the executive branch's hands were being kept clean and the Congress was taking the blame, but the result was a useful one.

Now, on Uruguay. I'm very vague about this. I remember the overthrow of Bordaberry and the Mitrione business, which I was very heavily involved in. I recall very few details of it.

Q: Let's leave it aside and move on to some other things. I do want to ask you a question which may be unfair, because it's really philosophical speculation. Something that has puzzled me and has puzzled a lot of people who are observers of Latin America is that the kind of human rights problems, torture and violence and repression that sometimes happens, somehow doesn't come as a surprise in some countries in Central America or Paraguay or Bolivia, or maybe even Argentina. But a lot of people were kind of deeply surprised and shocked that this should occur in Brazil. Is this surprise due to, in fact, a misunderstanding of Brazilian character? Or was it, indeed, a surprise to the Brazilians themselves? Was it an aberration of some sort?

CRIMMINS: This is still hotly debated in Brazil. For my four years that I spent in Brazil before, I was surprised, but I think the military in Latin America, given their power, have to be looked upon as something different from the society as a whole. So there was a loophole, let's say, in that sense. But the security forces under [Getúlio] Vargas, for example, in the Vargas dictatorship, particularly in the '30s and '40s, were very rough and people were tortured and died under torture in that period. So Brazil is not without a tradition, let's say, a bloody tradition of this kind. There are a lot of people who say that there are dark recesses in the Brazilian psyche that produce this kind of thing. Certainly they are more recessed, they are far deeper down and not mobilizeable, let's say, anywhere nearly so easily as they are in Central America and other parts of the continent. But they are there.

I think that one of the reasons why our military were reluctant to accept the evidence of Army involvement in this was in part influenced by this. There was, of course, the institutional interest in not having the relationship disturbed by people who would not approve of close ties with a repressive institution, but in addition to that, I think just said, "They're not constituted that way. Their approaches are different."

Q: "They're honorable soldiers and they fought with us in World War II."

CRIMMINS: That's right. Of course, one has to bear in mind that among, let's say, the big four of torturism and repressors—that is, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile—Brazil by far had fewer instances of torturees per thousand or disappeared. I remember very well a conversation with President Geisel, with _____ present, in which Geisel volunteered the comment that the Argentines were just crazy. Bodies were washing up in the Plata estuary, all over, and it was just incredible to him that this was happening. This doesn't excuse the widespread repression that occurred particularly in the '68 to '73 period, but it was on a considerably smaller scale, both absolutely and relatively, in terms of population, to go back to your torturees per thousand, than it was in Uruguay, Argentina, or Chile.

On Chile, of course-and I believe this to be true-received sort of technical assistance from Brazilian security forces right after the coup of 1973. So the Chileans may have learned some lessons, even though they went much farther than the Brazilians did. The Brazilians certainly were content to provide assistance to them.

Q: John, as you know, you and I shared an experience in the early 1970s, essentially an experiment in structured policy-making that had actually grown out of some of the efforts in the Pentagon and elsewhere in the 1960s, to relate goals and objectives, on the one hand, and resources, on the other, in a single program document. These were called CASPs, and fitted into the whole structure of interdepartmental groups and special interdepartmental groups and so on that existed at the time. It would be interesting, I think, if you could share your views of this whole process, how useful you found it personally, and what impact, in general, it had on policy-making at the time.

CRIMMINS: I thought the CASP was a very useful instrument, both in Washington and in the field. I'll take Washington first. I used to spend a great deal of time on the CASP. For me, it was an extremely helpful means of defining, on an inter-agency basis, our principal interests, goals, and objectives in the country, and it gave us, at the same time, an approximation-I wouldn't go farther than that-of the relevance of the resources that were being devoted to the pursuit of a particular interest, the relevance of those resources to the interest itself. I say approximation, because as you indicated earlier off the tape, some of our interest and the goals and objectives that flowed from the interest were so much more encompassing than the resources themselves, that it was almost a pro forma exercise.

But for me, the most useful purpose that the CASP served in Washington was to get inter-agency agreement on the general thrust of policy in a given country. Now, I myself believed that with the exception of the NSC staff, which never, so far as I recall, attended CASP meetings at the IG, and Treasury, all the other members of the IG took the thing quite seriously. The military did and the agency, even, although they had no resource inputs, they were terribly interested in the policy elements of the thing, and the analytical part of the agency attended, rather than the operational part.

We had some extremely heated debates in the IG, prompted by the CASPS. It also gave an opportunity for us in Washington, at senior levels in ARA, to get insights on how effective the embassies were in preparing this basic document, how thoughtful embassies were-and, of course, this really means ambassadors-about the tasks that they were supposed to be performing in the field.

As I said, I used to spend a great deal of time preparing for the IG meetings on the CASPs, and would, I think, on an average country probably spend five or six or seven hours in preparation one way or the other for the CASP meetings.

Q: I remember you saying some years ago that one of the values of the process was that it ensured that even the most insignificant countries that sometimes tend to get lost in the sound of fury of major policy issues, even the most insignificant countries would kind of get a hearing once a year.

CRIMMINS: That's right. And, of course, to pick up on that cogent observation, Ashley, I remember very clearly some of the discussions in the IG about the CASP on Paraguay, for example, where the very fundamental question arose: Do we have any military programs in Paraguay? I remember the ISA people were just shocked at the idea that we didn't really have any significant military interests in Paraguay. They said, "But we've always told the Congress that we have!" And I said, "Well, maybe it's time we told them that we didn't have."

Perhaps I'm romanticizing this in retrospect, but I always found the IG reviews of the CASP to be particularly rewarding, because I felt that we all ended up pretty much on the same page. As I said, Treasury thought these were a waste of time. They had no interest in them at all. So far as I recall, nobody from the NSC used to attend those meetings.

Q: You are entirely correct there, John, because I used to come to them quite often, not regularly to every one, but I came. Mary Brownell used to come now and then.

CRIMMINS: That's right. I take it back. Mary Brownell used to come to the ones that I would be chairing. That's right. I take it back. She did. I take it back. Treasury would always attend, I must say, but they always had a negative brief.

Just a brief note about the CASP in the field. When I was in Brazil, I found the annual CASP exercise to be a very useful one, and I ascribed a great deal of importance to it and insisted that everybody participate fully. For me, it was, again, an opportunity-and this, in a way, was even more useful than it had been to me in the policy position in the Department-it was an opportunity to have everybody think very clearly and very hard about what we were trying to do in Brazil, again to use the CASP terminology, what were truly our interests and what truly were the goals and the objectives that flowed from those interests. It was of great use to me in clarifying to myself what we should be about and, I think, to the others.

I used to have the CASP read periodically by the people, and for new arrivals, as I recall, I used to insist that they read the CASP when they came so that they would be clued in, would have some framework, some intellectual structure with which to become acquainted with the efforts of the embassy in Brazil. On that point, I always used to try to get the section chiefs to involve their junior officers in the process and, so far as I'm concerned, they did that. A lot of people complained eventually that it was elaborate, it was too time consuming, and it's been replaced by much simplified pieces of paper, none of which, it seems to me, has demonstrated the usefulness that the CASP had.

On the resource question, I think we are agreed that it wasn't effective as a means of assessing relative allocations of resources, but in terms of establishing what we should be doing in a country, I think it was first class.

Q: I thoroughly enjoyed my own involvement with it. I agree with you that the first-stage goals and objectives stage was very useful. The resource allocations stage didn't work.

CRIMMINS: Yes. Of course, under the goals and objectives we then had-we didn't call them courses of action, we called them-was that it? Courses of action. To serve the objectives.

Q: Once again, this is your interview, but I think one of the things that was always most useful is that it was a way in which Foreign Service officers got pried loose from the kind of language they had long used when asked to explain how or why they were doing things, language like "encourage the development of democracy." Because it made you say, "Why? How? With what? By how much?"

CRIMMINS: That's right.

Q: It got you away from general kinds of statements about policy to more precise harder kinds of statements about policy.

CRIMMINS: Yes. I guess the ambassador's statement, the beginning of the CASP, was supposed to be-it set the tone. I used to work very hard on that, and to illustrate the continuing usefulness during a CASP cycle, a year, I used to cite the CASP language often in reporting.

Q: It became a weapon in your policy arguments.

CRIMMINS: That's right. It did. It did. Q: "You guys signed on to that."

CRIMMINS: That's right. "As we said and as the Department agreed," so and so and so and so. I even tried-I've forgotten with how much success-to key reporting to CASP subsections. A report would be relevant to CASP A-12, or something like that.

Okay. So I guess we've exhausted that subject.

Q: Let's move on to your ambassadorship in Brazil, which was your final assignment.

CRIMMINS: That's right.

Q: What were the main issues that you struggled with during your period in Brazil? What were the main challenges?

CRIMMINS: To be somewhat oversimplified, there were three big issues during the nearly five years that I was in Brazil. The first one, the first and continuous one, were economic differences between us and Brazil. The second was the nuclear proliferation question. The third was the human rights question. All of these were highly controverted, some more emotional than others.

To begin with the economic ones, given the intricacy of the economic web that joins us in Brazil, disputes between the two countries are inevitable. I was never really terribly depressed about the continuing and constant economic conflicts between us and Brazil, because they all revolved around trade questions. To me, such questions, by their very nature, are resolvable through compromise of one kind or another, and they lend themselves to, let's say, classical treatment.

We had some severe economic issues revolving around dumping and duties of shoes, but these were, to me, manageable. They were difficult, but they were manageable through the exercise of the classic instruments involved in relationships-negotiation, diplomacy, mutual understanding, give and take. Those persisted. They persisted in various forms throughout the four and three-quarters years.

The nuclear proliferation question was of a different sort and much more intense and, in effect, unresolvable. As I used to say, there were high interests involved, high interest of ours and high interests of the Brazilians involved, and these were not susceptible to compromise. One side or the other had to give, or time had to change the terms of the problem.

The nuclear question arose in dramatic form, of course, when the Brazilians and the West Germans signed the nuclear treaty of 1975, June of 1975. The negotiations between Brazil and the Germans go back, to my knowledge, to 1969, when scientific and technological exchange agreements were initiated. There is evidence in the intelligence record that nuclear questions were advanced at that time. Some of the Brazilian personalities who later were very important in the nuclear question were stationed in Germany.

One of the critical events occurred in June of '74, when the US Government, in effect, said it could not guarantee the supply of enriched uranium to many of the purchases lined up for this. This was used by, let's say, the pro-German group as a justification for turning to the Germans for enriched uranium for the power reactors that Brazil wanted.

We had some insights into the negotiations that were going on. I think a fundamental mistake was made when in the early part of 1975 a decision was made in Washington not to invoke political arguments with the Germans against the relationship with Brazil, but, instead, to handle this at a technical level. My own understanding always was that Henry Kissinger was simply not concerned about nuclear proliferation. On the Indian explosion, no action was taken, I think, as I always understood, because Kissinger did not think it was that significant. I think his position changed, especially when the Pakistanis got involved with this sort of thing. But I think this carried over into the Brazilian thing, that he was not prepared to spend political capital with the West Germans on this issue.

This is the kind of question that an ambassador in Brazil is in no position to dispute. I mean, but in hindsight, I think we might have been able to prevent some of the worst proliferatory aspects of the treaty if political investment had been made. As it was, at the technical level, the agreement was tightened up. The Germans did agree to tighten it up. But in any case, we made known our concerns about this to the Germans. We did not take it up with the Brazilians. All of our efforts were directed at the Germans to try to get them to lay off. As I say, no political inputs were made in that effort. An agreement was signed in June of '75 and was hailed as a triumph for Brazil, a historic triumph. Monchechi had a headline up, "[Portuguese phrase]." There was a whole lot of expectation that this was going to lead to a nuclear explosive capability on the part of Brazil. There were safeguards in the treaty.

Q: Do you think that was ever a Brazilian intention?

CRIMMINS: Oh, yes. Yes, I'm satisfied that in some sectors, military sectors-and this was, in effect, admitted to me indirectly by the military.

Q: Because they saw some strategic purpose in it, or merely as an example of manifest destiny?

CRIMMINS: Prestige. They used to argue, there was a military argument, and this was made by a fairly senior general to one of my attachés, that if Argentina-they were very concerned about Argentina's evolution. Of course, Argentina was well ahead of Brazil at this time in this direction. If Argentina, over the _____ problem, threatened to bomb _____, I mean, this was the thinking, Brazil had to have some deterrent to prevent this. Even wilder than this was belief that Brazil could not-this is a force de frappe thing-Brazil could not depend on the United States to protect it, Brazil, from a nuclear threat from the Soviet Union, so Brazil had to have its own. This was seriously-well, I don't know how seriously, but this was again advanced to another attaché. But anyway, I'm satisfied that there were sectors in the military who looked upon this as a means of developing the technological capability to make a bomb. The pacing of this would depend on when Argentina did.

One of the things that was most worrisome was the popular belief that this did mean that Brazil was going to get the bomb and get it soon. And there was no discouragement of this, no authoritative discouragement of this popular belief by the government, which, you know, was significantly strengthened by the public euphoria that accompanied this thing.

Well, the US was obviously very unhappy about this, and this was a major breach in the non-proliferation regime. The continuation of this sort of unrestrained provision by West Germany of this kind of technology that involved enrichment and reprocessing down the line was looked upon in Washington as compromising the whole non-proliferation regime. The Brazilian-German agreement, which I don't think is repeatable, I don't think that it could be done again under the strengthened suppliers group ground rules, but at that time there were whole series of efforts on the multilateral-international plane taken to try to tighten up because of the Brazilian-West German agreement.

In the campaign of 1976 and continuing in the Congress, there was attention being paid to this question. The Brazilian-German agreement was strongly criticized by [President Jimmy] Carter as it had been in the Congress sort of bipartisan before. The Brazilians were very conscious of this criticism. At the same time-I'll get ahead of the story a little bit-the Carter campaign was criticizing the human rights record in Brazil.

The combination of the Carter references and pressure from the Congress, particularly, led, in October of '76, to a major policy statement by the Ford Administration, a statement that came out of the White House, on non-proliferation and the plutonium regime and all that kind of thing. It was a very strong, strong statement. We made that statement available to all relevant authorities in Brazil, and they just shrugged it off. For one thing, they were confident that Ford was going to win the election, and they were confident that Henry Kissinger, because of his "close friendship" with Silveira, the foreign minister, and his special ties to Brazil which they thought existed, would protect them from any problems of this kind.

The election came out, of course, the way it did, but my point about the Ford statement is that the Carter policy was essentially the same as the Ford policy, as set out in that October '76 statement.

The Brazilians were shocked that Carter won. There had been all sorts of negative inferences to Carter from official circles in Brazil before the election. The Brazilians were quite unashamed about their partisanship in the election. So when the election finally was held, there was a sense of shock and sort of a digging in of heels on the nuclear question.

The situation was really compounded, or aggravated severely, by an unwise statement that came out of the vice president's plane returning from Germany just before the inauguration. This was the vice president-elect. The statement was attributed to a senior person, who was obviously [Walter] Mondale, that we were going to do something about this and we had raised this question with Brazil and we had gotten no satisfaction, or something like that, but we were going to pursue it. Well, the simple fact was, as I pointed out right away to Washington, we had never raised this with Brazil, in keeping with the strategy of working with the West Germans rather than Brazil, that strategy being based in the belief that we couldn't do anything with Brazil.

The Brazilians reacted very negatively to that statement, and then as one of the first efforts under the new administration, Warren Christopher came down to Brazil in late February, early March of '77, to discuss this with them. His visit was preceded by all sorts of stories planted by the Brazilian administration, particularly the Foreign Ministry, about pressures that Brazil was expecting and the determination of Brazil to resist these pressure, etc., etc., etc.

The meetings were held. There were five or six or seven hours of meetings held at the foreign minister level. There was a general exploration. There were no threats or anything else, contrary to the subsequent treatment in the Brazilian press. Christopher was very, very, very good. He conducted this extremely well-extremely well, it seemed to me. We explained why we were concerned about this and why we hoped that the Brazilians would adopt comprehensive safeguards for all their nuclear activities. We explained the legislative prohibitions that existed in our foreign assistance acts. The Brazilian authorities put out the line that this was a great triumph for Brazil, that they had resisted all sorts of pressures from the United States. There was even a story that was picked up by the Washington Post and put on the front page, which infuriated me, that Christopher was not seen off by anybody at the airport, as an act of disrespect or something like that. The simple fact was that Christopher was leaving on a 4:00 a.m. plane. The secretary general, who was his opposite number of the Foreign Ministry, said, "I'll be out at the airport to see him off."

I said, "Romero, I'm sure he wouldn't want you to be out there at 4:00. Please don't come."

He said, "Would you check with Christopher?"

I said, "Sure. I know what he'll say. He's a very, very low key, laid back kind of guy and doesn't like this protocol stuff." And I did check with Christopher, and he said, "No, no. I don't want anybody there."

So I went back to Romero and he said, "Are you sure?"

I said, "Absolutely. He said please don't come." So he didn't come. The chief of protocol came at 4:00, which was fine with us. Then the press picked this up, and the Post's correspondent-I've forgotten his name, Murray somebody or other-wrote that this was a terrible affront to Christopher. The denials never caught up with the story. It was amazing. For two years after that, I'd come to Washington and people would tell me, "Oh, but they were really awful to Christopher. They really insulted Christopher, didn't they?" You know, it just didn't . . .

But this was a big, big problem, and there was really no give on either side on this question. I mean, the non-proliferation regime was too important to our global interest, really, for us to do more than nibble at the edges of the situation, and the Brazilians had their backs up, their principal argument-and it's a legitimate one-was that they were going to develop the technology. They needed this technology if they were going to be a major power. Of course, they insisted then, and insist now, that their purpose is purely peaceful. At that time, we were very concerned that there was down the line a desire to establish the capability of building an explosive. I'm satisfied that that was the case and remains the case. That does not mean that they're going to build a bomb. Everything, in good part, depends upon what Argentina does. But you know, it's unlike the situation in South Asia, the India-Pakistan thing. There is no security reason for Brazil or Argentina to develop a weapon.

Q: Or the Iraqi-Israeli thing.

CRIMMINS: The Iraqi-Israeli thing. There are real security problems in those areas, but they do not exist-and it's a question of national prestige. I mean, to Brazil-and this goes back to basic national security doctrine in Brazil, as elaborated in the first instance by the I _____ Superio _____, this is a hallmark. This capability is a hallmark of a major power. And in those days, Brazil had, with every reason, to believe-with good reasons-the goal of becoming a second tier power sometime in the early 21st century. But this, as I say, was one of the hallmarks, along with a certain level of population and _____ese thinking.

Now, the Brazilian nerves were very raw about the nuclear thing. They were worked up about it. A lot of phony stuff issued, planted by the government about this. Then the human rights question intervened.

Q: We'll deal with that.

CRIMMINS: Let me say this. The human rights and I in Brazil go back to October of '74 when the G-2 in the section of the 4th Army in Recife imprisoned and tortured an American citizen named Morris-I've forgotten his first name-who had been a Methodist missionary at one point, then stringer for Time at another point, sort of a small businessman at that time, well connected with some of the opposition sectors in the MDB [Movimento Democrático Brasileiro] in Brazil, and was known to D_____ Del Camra. We had known that the security apparatus had its eye on him because our consul in Recife at that time, Richard Brown, had been told this. Brown said he wanted to be kept informed about any investigations they were conducting, something like that.

Anyway, they picked him up, tortured him. We knew that he was missing. Rich Brown made all sorts of inquiries all over, including to the G-2 section of the 4th Army. He got absolute negatives from everybody: "We don't have him." "We don't have him." "We don't have him." I was away in the Amazon when this was going on. I came back. Diego Asencio was my political counselor at the time. He met me at the airport when I came back and said, "I think we have a dead one." He was really concerned that Morris had been killed.

They had been talking to the Foreign Ministry about getting access to him, and we finally did get access to him. It turned out that he had been tortured and had been held by the G-2, contrary to-well, I was very upset about this, very concerned about it. I thought that this was almost a deliberate effort to take us on on this kind of question, and interestingly enough, many Brazilians-I don't know how many, but well-informed Brazilians thought that this, in fact, was an effort on the part of the 4th Army to challenge Golbeidi and Geisel on the D_____ Arbetora effort that they were undertaking. This was a signal from the notoriously hard-lined 4th Army that things were not going to be that easy.

In any case, I sent a very strong note to the Foreign Ministry demanding access to him and demanding medical treatment, etc., etc., etc. To make a long story short, the Army was furious. Of course, the 4th Army commander, who was caught out in this, was enraged that anybody would have the temerity to do this, and the minister of the Army, Frota, seconded this.

We had been under heavy pressure from the press about what was going on with this guy. He was well known, and the whole incident came to the attention of the press, and all American correspondents were calling us. I authorized statements to be made to the press that this is what happened. Of course, this all became public. The Army, it turned out, Frota wanted me to be PNGed, but the Foreign Ministry and Geisel, obviously, thought this was be a little much.

Now, that's '74. To bring this up to '76, in January of '77, for the first time, all the country human rights reports had to be made to the Congress.

Q: Under the Carter Administration?

CRIMMINS: It was done under the Ford Administration. The amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act was done in June of '76. This was in the Ford Administration. In fact, the reports were done during the Ford Administration. The Carter Administration, so far as I know, had nothing to do with the preparation of the reports. You know how it works.

Q: Right.

CRIMMINS: Well, the Brazilians, whose nerves, as I said earlier, were raw because of the nuclear thing, reacted very violently to this, the government did. I was summoned. We delivered a copy of the report on a Friday afternoon, about 4:00, the first time Dave Simcox could get an appointment over there. We decided that we had to deliver the report. We were given leeway by the Department on this thing to deliver it or not. It was going to be made public. "It's going to be delivered to the Congress on Friday and could well be made public by the Congress on Saturday."

I decided we had to tell the Brazilians because the last thing that I wanted was to have the _____ Sao Paulo bureau in Washington sending this thing down, having it appear in full text in the _____ Sao Paulo on Sunday and take them by surprise. They knew this was coming. We had told them often that this was going to be done.

So we decided to do it, and we got our copy on Friday in the pouch and delivered it to the Foreign Ministry Friday afternoon. Saturday morning at 9:00, I was summoned to the Foreign Ministry, which was extraordinary, and told that they were, in effect, renouncing all military assistance from us.

To open the parenthesis here, the Brazilians' sort of conspiratorial theories thought at first that we had deliberately planned to ruin their weekend-no kidding!-by delivering this at 4:00. (Laughter) We privately set them straight on that, and I think they finally came around to believing that we were not that malicious. But anyway, they were terribly exercised about this-terribly exercised! And they went so far as to cut their own throats in their total renunciation. They suddenly discovered they weren't going to be able to get any spares for their F-5s and that sort of thing, and the Air Force was beside themselves. They didn't understand. This was all done by Frota, and they were not very happy about it to begin with.

Anyway, the human rights thing led to the renunciation of the military assistance, and eventually to the abrogation of the agreements that had produced the joint Brazil-US Military Commission, neither of which was a great loss. In fact, all the time that I was there, we used to debate constantly whether we should politely and gradually phase out of the joint Brazil relationship. Interestingly enough, the Brazilians were doing the same thing. The joint staff did a study after Geisel came in, at Geisel's behest, and they came to the conclusion that the agreement really had no benefit from Brazil and it might as well be terminated. Geisel, we knew, said, "Well, I agree. That's right. But I don't want to take the initiative in this. Maybe it will work out and we can just let it go under the right circumstances in a friendly way."

Our position was essentially the same, too. Of course, the Pentagon was interested in this because it had a major general's billet, for one thing. It was a relic of the war and of the "50s and was all tied up with the mystique of the Brazilian expeditionary force that had produced the first co-chairman of the commission.

My point here is that the military relationship was obsolete, really, was antiquated, and the Brazilians felt it was paternalistic. I certainly agreed. We were getting into all sorts of complicated questions of insisting, under the regulations and the law, that the Brazilians had to account for every jeep that had been given them under the grant programs back 15 years before. It was just a mess, and it was becoming very irritating to both sides. So it was no loss, but the Brazilians used this as a means of demonstrating their annoyance and their independence. To raise this to a high policy plane, this was very consistent with the foreign policy of the Geisel-Silveira period. There was a desire, to me consistent with Brazilian history since the mid-"50s, except for the aberration of the Castelo Branco period, the two or three years of Castelo Branco, a desire for greater leeway, greater elbow room with respect to us, a thrust toward an independent foreign policy.

Q: In Latin America, as well.

CRIMMINS: In Latin America, but particularly pronounced in Brazil. This strong trend began in Brazil in the middle "50s, was given structure and firm direction in the Geisel-Silveira period. Silveira got the job, I think, because of a basic paper that he wrote, which I never saw but I can imagine what it said, because in speeches his position became clear, no automatic alignment. There were a whole series of, in effect, slogans. "No automatic alignment, ecumenicism in foreign policy. Brazil is of the West, but not an ally of the United States." We were not allies, which I believed very firmly. The Brazilian posture was, I think, a very correct one and, from their point of view, one that was befitting for a country that had made so much progress and was emerging on the world scene.

So the breakup of the military relationship would have been inevitable. It was messy this way and modestly traumatic. So those were the three big issues. They were running questions. But to repeat, the economic issues, the trade issues were persistent and had nothing to do with, let's say, the basic Brazilian foreign policy posture. They were defending their economic interests and we were defending ours. This led to the frictions and conflicts. But those conflicts were resolvable, in my view, by sensible use of the normal instruments of diplomacy.

The nuclear thing was a very special situation, one which did not lend itself to a resolution and still has not lent itself to a resolution.

The human rights question was, in effect, anachronistic when it began, as the human rights report that created the immediate issue demonstrated. In the report there were very positive references to the influence of Geisel in reining in the security apparatus. The flap over the human rights situation was, to me, a consequence of the great Brazilian insensitivity on the nuclear question.

So those were the three big issues.

End of interview